

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

"Undoubtedly, all praise is for Allah. We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. Alhamdulillah, in this month's training syllabus, we will try to understand the relationship and dealings between the leaders and workers in a collective environment in the light of the Qur'an and Hadith.

The concept of collectivity in the Qur'an and Hadith is as prominent as the emphasis given to every Muslim individual to remain attached to the collective Ummah. Unfortunately, there is a considerable lack of attention in this regard among Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'It is obligatory upon you to adhere to the group and avoid division because Satan is with one person but stays away from two.' (Tirmidhi, Chapter on Trials).

Allah Almighty has revealed various commandments, some related to the individual and some to society. The implementation of collective commands is impossible without a system of order. Hence, one of the objectives of Islamic collectivity is to implement the commands of Allah and ensure that these commands serve as a guide in both individual and collective life. For, 'Islam does not exist without a group, the group does not exist without a leader, and the leader cannot exist without obedience.' This statement of Hazrat Umar (RA) is enough to clarify the importance of collectivity in Islam. It perfectly represents the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, the Qur'an has made obedience to the leaders (Ulul Amr) mandatory along with the obedience to Allah and His Messenger (PBUH), and the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) himself established an exemplary collective system and explicitly commanded the Ummah to follow it.

Obedience is a necessary component of collective order and the foundation of Islamic collectivity because without obedience, the leader cannot fulfill the responsibilities of leadership. For this, the obedience of the followers is essential. It is important to understand that obedience is

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

not absolute but conditional upon goodness (Ma'ruf). If the leader commands something wrong or sinful, obedience is not obligatory, and his commands should not be followed.

The summary of what is narrated in the Qur'an and Hadith on this topic is that all Muslims should live as part of Ummah, adhering to the collective order, and fulfilling the requirements of collectivity in their lives. Otherwise, the purpose for which this Ummah was raised will become unattainable.

May Allah grant us the ability to understand and act upon the commandments of the Holy Qur'an and to implement them in our lives. Ameen."

Study of the Quran

Important Qualities for a Leader and Guide in Collectivity:

1. فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۚ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ
وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۚ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ
﴿159﴾ سورة آل عمران

(O Prophet) By Allah's mercy, you were kind and gentle with them. If you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have surely turned away from you. So, forgive them, seek Allah's forgiveness for them, and consult them in important matters. Then, once you have made a decision, put your trust in Allah, for indeed, Allah loves those who rely on Him.

Tafseer:

Verse 159 Translation (Surah Aal-e-Imran):

"So, by the mercy of Allah, you were gentle with them." This verse from the blessed Surah is of great importance. In a collective life, whether it is a leader, a person of authority, or someone with responsibilities around whom others gather, they should always remember that, after all, those around them are human beings too. They have emotions and feelings, and they also possess self-respect. Therefore, they should be treated with kindness, not harshness. They are not employees but rather volunteers. The people who were with the Prophet (PBUH) were not salaried soldiers; they gathered around him out of faith.

Even today, when an Islamic organization comes into existence, those who work within it are connected through a sense of religious passion. Hence, the leaders of such organizations should adopt a gentle attitude toward their followers. Allah addresses the Prophet (PBUH), saying that it is by Allah's mercy that you are so kind and gentle with them.

One key point is that the Prophet (PBUH) was given such instructions in a manner that also praises and acknowledges his already-existing noble qualities. Furthermore, by adding "by Allah's mercy" before these instructions, it is also emphasized that

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

these qualities of perfection within the Prophet (PBUH) are due to Allah's mercy, not just personal virtues. The word "mercy" is used in an indefinite form to indicate that this mercy is vast and immense, showing that it not only applies to the Companions but also extends to the Prophet (PBUH) himself, as it was through Allah's mercy that he was endowed with such perfect qualities.

A third important benefit is also highlighted: if the Prophet (PBUH) did not possess these qualities of gentleness, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion, the mission of reforming the people, which was entrusted to him, would not have succeeded as desired. Instead of benefiting from his guidance and moral reform, the people would have distanced themselves from him.

This entire discussion provides another key lesson: the etiquettes of guiding and reforming others. Anyone who intends to work in the field of spreading guidance, calling people to Allah, and reforming society must develop these qualities within themselves. After all, if people couldn't endure harshness from Allah's beloved Messenger (PBUH), who then can expect to gather people around them and fulfill the duty of reform through severity and ill-tempered behavior?

"And if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have certainly dispersed from around you."

As Poet says: "Some broke away from the caravan, and some grew disillusioned with the sanctuary, because the leader of the caravan lacked the quality of winning hearts!"

In this verse, Allah the Almighty has said that if you were harsh and hard-natured, people would have scattered from around you. From this, we understand that for a guide and a preacher, harshness and severe speech are like poison and can ruin their efforts.

"So forgive them" — Since some of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) made such a grave mistake that it caused great harm to the Muslims, the Prophet (PBUH) is being told not to harbor any ill feelings toward his companions. Allah has already forgiven their mistake, so you too should forgive them. Even in normal circumstances, you should continue to forgive them.

"And seek forgiveness for them" — Whenever they make a mistake, you should pray for their forgiveness.

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

"And consult them in matters" — Don't adopt the approach of never listening to them again. Instead, keep them included in consultations. This creates mutual trust, as they feel that their leader values their opinions and gives importance to their input. This is, in fact, very necessary for collective life.

In this entire verse, several important qualities are made essential for a leader, a person in charge, or a preacher of Allah's message:

Avoid harsh speech and bad temper.

If they make a mistake or cause harm, do not seek revenge. Rather, forgive them and overlook their faults.

Do not stop caring for their well-being because of their errors. Continue praying for their forgiveness and maintain good relations with them.

"And when you have resolved (on a matter), put your trust in Allah." — After consultation, when you (PBUH) have settled on a course of action and made a decision, do not be concerned with anyone else's opinion. Now, place all your trust in Allah.

Before the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (PBUH) consulted his companions. Some people supported the idea of fighting from within Medina, which was also the Prophet's (PBUH) opinion. However, some said they preferred to fight in the open field as they desired martyrdom. The Prophet (PBUH) accommodated their wish and decided to fight outside. Immediately after, when the Prophet (PBUH) came out from Aisha's (RA) chamber, he was unusually wearing armor and weapons, indicating that a serious matter was about to unfold. Seeing this, those who had advocated for fighting outside the city withdrew their opinion and said, "O Prophet (PBUH), we retract our suggestion, please decide as you see fit." But the Prophet (PBUH) replied, "No, the decision will stand. It does not befit a Prophet to remove his weapons after preparing for battle without fighting."

This verse was revealed in confirmation of the Prophet's (PBUH) approach, saying that when you (PBUH) make a decision, put your trust in Allah.

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

2. وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾

Surah Fussilat – 41

(O Prophet), Good and evil cannot be equal. Respond 'to evil' with what is best, then the one you are in a feud with will be like a close friend (34). But this cannot be attained except by those who are patient and who are truly fortunate. (35)

Interpretation: " Good and evil cannot be equal. Respond 'to evil' with what is best, then the one you are in a feud with will be like a close friend."

To fully understand the meaning of this Ayah, one must consider the circumstances under which the Prophet (PBUH) and, through him, his followers were given this guidance. The situation was that the call to truth was being met with extreme obstinacy and aggressive opposition, which shattered all boundaries of human decency and ethics. Every lie was being told against the Prophet and his companions. All sorts of tactics were being employed to defame him and to sow doubts about him in the hearts of the people. Various accusations were being leveled against him, and a whole army of propagandists was spreading whispers against him. The Prophet and his companions were being subjected to all kinds of torture, which forced a significant number of Muslims to leave the country. Furthermore, to stop his preaching, a program was devised to have a group of troublemakers constantly on the lookout, creating such a racket when the Prophet opened his mouth to invite people to the truth that no one could hear him. These were such demoralizing circumstances that all avenues for the call appeared blocked. In these times of adversity, this remedy for countering opposition was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH).

The first thing stated was that good and evil are not equal. That is, even if your opponents unleash a terrifying storm of evil, making goodness seem utterly powerless and helpless, evil carries within itself a weakness that ultimately leads to its downfall. As long as a person remains human, their nature cannot help but despise evil. Even the companions of evil, and its very advocates know in their hearts that they are dishonest, unjust, and obstinate for their own interests. This understanding does not only undermine their dignity in the eyes of others; it also diminishes their own self-worth, creating an inner turmoil that continuously undermines their resolve and courage in the face of opposition.

If that goodness, which may seem completely powerless and weak, continues to persist, it will ultimately prevail. This is because goodness, in and of itself, captivates hearts, and regardless of how corrupt a person may be, they cannot help but recognize its value. When

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

goodness and evil confront each other openly and their true natures are fully revealed, very few remain after a prolonged struggle who do not become disenchanted with evil and enamored with goodness.

The second point made was to counter evil not with any goodness, but with goodness of a higher degree. For instance, if someone does wrong to you and you merely forgive them, that is just goodness. However, the higher form of goodness is when you do a kindness to someone who has treated you poorly when the opportunity arises. The result of this approach is that even the worst enemy can ultimately become a close friend. This is because it is human nature. If you remain silent in response to an insult, it may indeed be a good act, but it will not silence the person hurling the insults. However, if you respond to insults with kind prayers, even the most shameless opponent will feel ashamed, and it will be difficult for them to speak ill of you again.

If someone constantly seizes opportunities to harm you, and you continue to endure their wrongs, they may become even bolder in their mischief. But if at some point they find themselves in trouble and you come to their rescue, they will find themselves at your feet because no mischief can withstand that goodness. However, it would be incorrect to interpret this general principle to mean that every enemy will necessarily become a close friend through such high acts of goodness. There are indeed wicked people in the world whose harmful nature does not diminish even when you excel in forgiveness and respond to their evil with kindness. But such incarnate evil is nearly as rare as incarnate goodness.

Interpretation: "This quality is not granted except to those who are patient."

This remedy is indeed very effective, but it is not easy to implement. It requires great determination, immense willpower, significant endurance, and a strong control over oneself. Temporarily, a person might exhibit great goodness in the face of evil. This is not extraordinary. However, where one must fight for years against these deceitful and immoral wrongdoers, who do not hesitate to cross any limits of decency and who are also intoxicated by power and authority, to continue to oppose evil with goodness, and particularly with a high degree of goodness, without ever losing control, is not a task for an ordinary person. Only one who has firmly resolved to work for the elevation of truth with a cool head, who has completely subdued their own desires to reason and understanding, and who has such deep roots in goodness and righteousness that no act of malice or wickedness from opponents can bring them down from their elevated status, can accomplish this.

Interpretation: "And this rank is not attained except by those who are very fortunate."

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

This is a law of nature. A person of very high stature is usually endowed with these qualities, and anyone possessing these traits cannot be hindered by any power in the world from achieving success. It is simply impossible for lowly individuals with their despicable tactics and vile actions to defeat such a person.

Adherence to Social Order is a Religious Obligation:

3. إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّى يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِذَا اسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأَذِنَ لِمَن شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿62﴾ لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿63﴾

سورة النور

The 'true' believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a public matter, they do not leave without his permission. Indeed, those who ask your permission 'O Prophet' are the ones who 'truly' believe in Allah and His Messenger. So when they ask your permission for a private matter, grant permission to whoever you wish and ask Allah's forgiveness for them. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. 63. Do not treat the Messenger's summons to you 'as lightly' as your summons to one another.[722] Allah certainly knows those of you who slip away, hiding behind others.[723] So let those who disobey his orders beware, for an affliction may befall them, or a painful torment may overtake them.

Tafseer:

These are the final instructions being given to enhance the discipline of the Muslim community more than before. The same command applies to your successors and the leaders of the Islamic community after the Prophet (ﷺ). When Muslims are gathered for a collective purpose, whether in times of war or peace, it is not permissible for them to leave or disperse without the Amir's permission.

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

This emphasizes that seeking permission without a genuine need is inherently wrong. Permission is only justified if there is a real necessity to leave. That is to say, whether to grant permission or not is at the discretion of the Messenger and, after him, the Amir of the community. If the Amir believes that the collective need is more important than the individual's need, he has the full right to deny permission, and in this case, a believer should not complain about it.

It is also warned that if there is even a slight element of making excuses in seeking permission, or if the spirit of prioritizing individual needs over collective needs is at play, this is a sin. Therefore, the Prophet and his successors should not merely grant permission, but should also say to whoever is granted permission, "May God forgive you."

In the interpretation of the Qur'an, verse 63, the original word used is "دُعَاءَ" which means both calling and praying. Furthermore, "دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ" can mean either calling upon the Messenger or praying for him. In light of these various meanings, the verse can be understood in three ways, all of which are correct and logical. First, do not consider the Messenger's call as similar to that of any ordinary person; the Messenger's call holds extraordinary significance. Secondly, if someone calls you and you do not respond, you are free to do so, but if the Messenger calls you and you do not go, or if you feel even a slight discomfort in your heart, your faith is at risk. Thirdly, the call of the Messenger should not be treated like the call of ordinary people; you should not call upon the Messenger (ﷺ) as you call out to one another by name. In this matter, utmost respect must be maintained, as even a slight disrespect will not escape accountability before Allah.

All three interpretations, although correct in meaning and encompassed by the words of the Qur'an, are best understood in light of the latter discourse. Surah An-Nur, verse 103, indicates another sign of hypocrisy: when called for collective services of Islam, they do come, as they want to remain associated with Muslims for some reason, but this attendance is deeply unpleasant for them, and they somehow sneak away.

Surah An-Nur, verse 104, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (RA) interpreted the term "fitna" as "the tyranny of oppressors." This means that if Muslims violate the commands of the

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), they will be subjected to oppressive rulers. However, this is just one form of fitna, and there can be countless other forms, such as internal divisions and civil wars, moral decay, disarray of the community system, internal unrest, political and material power collapse, and subjugation by outsiders.

In the interpretation of the Qur'an, verse 62, the last section, which consists of only three verses, contains rulings specifically related to communal life. When they are with him on a collective matter, they should not leave until they seek his permission. This command, following the Prophet (ﷺ), is also for his successors and the leaders of the Islamic community. Under this command, all members of the community are bound to a discipline. If such discipline does not exist within the community, then when going on a mission, some individuals may wander off here or there. In such a situation, no collective task can be completed. Therefore, it has been made mandatory that if anyone wants to take leave due to an emergency or excuse, they must formally seek permission from the Amir present.

The authority to grant leave rests solely with the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, a principle has been established for the Islamic community that in collective matters, the authority to grant leave lies with the Amir. Consequently, if the Amir or commander deems it appropriate based on the mission's needs and the circumstances at hand, he may grant permission to the one requesting leave. If he does not find it appropriate, he may deny permission. Therefore, any subordinate or appointed person should not assume that leave is their obligatory right after seeking permission.

The verse also emphasizes that the collective work for which the Prophet (ﷺ) took the believers along is not his personal task but rather the work of the religion. If someone requests leave from this religious work, it implies that they have prioritized their personal affairs over the religious cause, deeming the religious task less important compared to their own. This is indeed a serious matter and a delicate situation, which is why it is being emphasized that prayers for forgiveness should be made for such individuals, as Allah is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful.

It is important to note that this theme is also found in Surah At-Tawbah, but the nature there is completely different. This difference can be understood by recognizing that Surah An-Nur was revealed in the sixth year of Hijrah, while Surah At-Tawbah was revealed in the ninth year of Hijrah. The Islamic movement was

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

progressing toward its goal moment by moment. Conditions were gradually changing, and as circumstances changed, the requirements also kept evolving. Hence, it was stated in the sixth year that those who formally seek permission from the Prophet (ﷺ) are indeed believers, while three years later, in Surah At-Tawbah during the Battle of Tabuk, it was stated that those who believe do not even seek permission. This was, in fact, an emergency situation where it was made obligatory for every Muslim to participate in the Battle of Tabuk. In such situations, requesting leave from participation was a sign of hypocrisy. Thus, in Surah At-Tawbah, permission was explicitly denied, saying, “Allah has forgiven you; why did you give them permission?” (Qur'an 9:43).

If the Prophet (ﷺ) had not granted permission, these people would still not have gone, but their hypocrisy would have been exposed! Conversely, here the Prophet (ﷺ) is being granted the discretion to grant leave to whomever he wishes. From another perspective, in such situations, we can observe a three-tier classification among the members of an Islamic community.

The first tier consists of those members who have dedicated themselves entirely to the work of the religion. For them, no worldly task holds greater importance or necessity than this work. Therefore, there is no occasion for them to request leave. The second tier consists of those members who request leave formally under personal necessity in such situations, while the lowest tier comprises those who sneak away without seeking permission. Thus, they have no connection to this religious work at all. In this classification, although the middle tier may be of a lower status than the upper tier, it is still better compared to the lowest tier.

It is evident from our observations that during the gatherings of Islamic communities, some members neither participate in the gathering nor formally seek permission from their Amir. They neither inform beforehand nor apologize afterward. They appear to have no sense of responsibility or obligation to the discipline. Those members who present their excuses and formally seek permission from their Amir are indeed better than those who do not. However, the highest rank is still that which does not prioritize any worldly task over the work of the religion. Those who occupy this rank have their personal affairs entrusted to Allah. They set aside their own matters for the sake of Allah's work, and Allah Himself takes care of their affairs.

Monthly Training Program - Study of the Quran

October 2024

In the interpretation of the Qur'an, verse 63, it emphasizes that the call of the Messenger (ﷺ) holds extraordinary significance. It is not a big deal if you do not respond to a call from someone else, but if you do not respond to the call of the Messenger (ﷺ), then you should worry about your faith.

Now consider this: if one person invites someone to their home for a meal, while on the other hand, the Messenger (ﷺ) also invites someone to a meal, what a stark difference there is between the two! But when it comes to the call for jihad in the way of Allah, there is an even greater distinction; the Messenger (ﷺ) is calling people to come along with him in Allah's way, while an ordinary person is calling someone else for their assistance. There is a vast difference between the call of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the call of an ordinary person.

One meaning of “دُعَاءُ الرَّسُولِ” is “to call upon the Messenger (ﷺ).” This means that just as you address one another, you cannot address the Messenger (ﷺ) in that manner. Clear guidelines regarding the respect and reverence of the Messenger (ﷺ) have been provided in Surah Al-Hujurat: “O believers! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak to him loudly as you speak to one another, lest your deeds become nullified while you do not realize.”

Surah Al-Hujurat will provide further details on this topic.

“Indeed, Allah knows those who stealthily slip away from you.” This refers to those whose intentions are already tainted. Their situation is such that when people set out for a mission, they also join in. Then, when they see their names included among those departing, they sneak away by hiding behind others. Or it may also be that they participate in a gathering, and when suddenly some volunteers are needed for a mission, they sneak away before the names of the volunteers are called.